

## Mikki Douglass - USFS

I've had the honor of working with the NMA since 2002, when I began my career with the USFS. I am the Lead OHV Ranger on the Cle Elum Ranger District. I have primarily managed logout work parties, and recently have worked with the NMA on trail construction/reconstruction projects. I also consult with specialists, trail leads and users to lay out sustainable OHV trails on USFS lands.

My history in motorized recreational use started at an early age; I started riding off-road motorcycles when I was 10 years old and raced motocross until age 23. I have ridden off-road motorcycles my entire life. After my Mountain Bike race career, I began to volunteer for the USFS by logging out trails on the Cle Elum Ranger District. I rode with John McHaffie and Ron Morgenthaler (1998-2001). When Ron retired, I was offered his position on the crew (2002). John and Ron were NMA members as well as USFS ORV Rangers. Both men taught me the value of INVOLVING users in overseeing trail maintenance and preservation (that's how I was recruited as a volunteer); they were working on a large downed tree that was across the trail I was riding, and they "asked" me to help them. I was hooked from that point on; they taught me so much about working with, involving and respecting all trail users (after all, I was a trail user long before I was a trail ranger, and my passion for public lands and my desire to preserve the sport of off-road motorized trail use was well established before joining the agency). In addition to the influences of both John and Ron, I was privileged to work directly under Tim Foss until 2015, when he retired. Tim genuinely treated all land and trail users with respect and without prejudice. I can honestly say, in the 15 years of working under him, I never heard him say a negative word about the motorized users. He believed the public lands were truly "the land of many uses" and he worked diligently and tirelessly to preserve and maintain the trails on the Cle Elum Ranger District. I was taught by the best, and I hope that I have honored their hard work and legacy by continuing their dedication to serving and respecting the users and user-groups. Working side by side with the members of the NMA has been, and continues to be, a great privilege. I have learned so much from our volunteers and I am at awe with the ones who work so tirelessly to protect, preserve and maintain the motorized trail system in WA State. The work doesn't always pay

immediate dividends, but our volunteers truly care about the future of their sport, and the importance of educating new users about TREAD Lightly! principles. Working together to preserve responsible off-road recreation for generations to come takes a lot of time and commitment, and the NMA Volunteers have offered both in abundance. It has truly been an honor to work with your wonderful members.

The NMA has come through for us on countless “emergency” calls and rapid Volunteer response! If we have an emergency trail situation (large numbers of blowdown, a trail washout, or other situations that create a trail hazard and/or warrant a trail closure for safety or environmental concerns), I can make one phone call and get the volunteers needed to remedy the situation. Table Mountain burn area, West Fork Teanaway washout, Mount Clifty tread reestablished and widened, Goat Peak switchback and drainage work, North Fork Taneum rock step work, are just a few examples of a swift “call-to-arms” get the work done NOW response from our volunteers. The NMA Volunteers are often the first to see and remedy hazardous trail conditions, and report situations that might need agency attention (where machines or larger crews might be needed.

In the past two years, the NMA has really stepped up their commitment to trail maintenance and have invested in equipment and in training their members in trail maintenance and reconstruction. Their work in the Taneum (Fishhook Flats and Lightning Point) is a testament of great things to come in the partnership between a highly trained volunteer work force and Federal and State Agencies. It’s exciting to see these changes!

The highlight of my career has been watching so many kids learning to ride on our District trails....and seeing them today at 25-30 years of age, now with their kids. I think that’s what we are all most proud of; that we can pay forward, to years to come, the ability for new generations to enjoy the same recreational experiences we were granted at their age. The NMA is helping maintain that legacy, and it’s such an honor to be in partnership with them.